



# PLANNING COMMISSION

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING

### **MEETING SUMMARY**

Regular Bi-monthly Meeting  
Thursday, February 2, 2017, 6:30pm  
City of Sammamish Council Chambers

### **COMMISSIONERS PRESENT**

Frank Blau, *Pos. 6*  
Roisin O'Farrell, *Pos. 2*  
Larry Crandall, *Pos. 4, Vice-Chair*  
Jane Garrison, *Pos. 5*  
Nancy Anderson, *Pos. 7*

### **Absent:**

Shanna Collins, *Pos. 3, Chair*  
Eric Brooks, *Pos. 1*

### **STAFF PRESENT**

Jeff Thomas, Director of Community Development  
Doug McIntyre, Senior Planner  
Kellye Hilde, Planning Manager  
Kevin Johnson, Permit Technician

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Frank Blau called the Sammamish Planning Commission meeting to order at 6:31 pm.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** Vice Chair Crandall motioned; Commissioner Anderson seconded –  
**Approved 5:0**

The Agenda was approved as read.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Commissioner Anderson motioned; Vice Chair Crandall seconded –  
**Approved 5:0**

1/19/2017 minutes approved as distributed.

**Public Comment: Non-Agenda:** (3 Min Individual / 5 Min Representative)

[Bookmarked Video Link](#)

Mary Wictor commented on the previous meeting (1/19/17) agenda topic (sign code) and wanted to let it be known that the corrugated plastic signs are cost effective for putting out information to the public, especially in the case of school groups with limited funds.

**Public Comment Closed**

**NEW BUSINESS** [Bookmarked Video Link](#)

### **Election of Chair / Vice Chair Positions**

Commissioner Crandall nominated Shanna Collins for Chair  
Commissioner Blau nominated Larry Crandall for Vice Chair  
Commissioner Collins voted in as Chair 5:0  
Commissioner Crandall voted in as Vice Chair 4:0, Commissioner Crandall abstained from the vote

## **OLD BUSINESS**

[Bookmarked Video Link](#)

### **Neighborhood Character – Work Session**

Doug McIntyre, Senior Planner and Kellye Hilde, Planning Manager presented on “Zone Transition and Arterial Street Setbacks”

### **Staff and Commission commenced discussion:**

#### **Overview:**

Staff stated that this is a repeat presentation for most Commission members but wanted to bring the new Commissioners up to speed as well as gather additional input and direction to develop draft code amendments and regulations to bring back to the March 2, 2017 meeting for additional analysis.

#### **Neighborhood Character**

- Arterial Street Setbacks & Zone to Zone Setbacks

Staff explained how the City has three types of arterials, Principal, Minor, and Collector

- 228<sup>th</sup> & Issaquah Pine Lake Rd being Principal Arterials
- Minor and Collector Arterials handle significantly less volume than Principals

#### **Arterial Street Setbacks**

STANDARDS	R-1	R-4	R-6
Minimum Setback from Principal Arterial	50 ft	50 ft	50 ft
Minimum Setback from Minor Arterial	40 ft	40 ft	40 ft
Minimum Setback from Collector Arterial	25 ft	25 ft	25 ft

Graphic examples were presented and based on square flat lots which are not common in the City.

#### **Zone to Zone Transition Setbacks**

STANDARDS	R-1	R-4	R-6
Minimum Setback from R-1 Zones		100 ft	100 ft
Minimum Setback from R-4 Zones			50 ft

Staff presented various options for property setbacks from an adjacent arterial. Options were also presented showing various setbacks widths between different residential zones. Staff presented that both arterial and zone transition setbacks would impact the usable area available for development.

Staff presented current code that addresses landscape screening between residential and commercial zones. Commercial setbacks have larger interior setback requirements from residential property lines.

Town Center landscape screening requirements were discussed (21B.30.080)

Staff asked the Commission to consider how they would like to see changes to landscape screening and setback requirements. The suggestions by Commission member will be addressed at the March 2, 2017 meeting.

Vice Chair Crandall asked for Commission members comments.

Commissioner Garrison commented that the buffer options presented are very generous and she supports the 50' buffer for 228<sup>th</sup>. 228<sup>th</sup> should have limited access and be treated in such a way to get from point A to B and that screening is necessary to keep this busy street separated from residential areas.

Commissioner Blau is concerned with the options presented and that buffers are too large making it difficult for properties to develop. Blau also mentioned how he is worried about the unintended consequences of buffers when there are multiple applied (screening, critical area, zoning transition).

Commissioner Blau also stated that he isn't sure that buffers between zones is what the community truly is asking for. These types of buffers do not seem to do anything to help reach the neighborhood character that is desired.

#### **Jeff Thomas, Director of Community Development addressed the Commission:**

Director Thomas congratulated the new Chair and Vice Chair as well as thanking Frank Blau for his work as Chair.

Director Thomas began by building on Doug's presentation and reiterated that staff would like to hear the Commissions ideas and thoughts on how to shape and mold the ideas that have been presented so that in the near future these ideas can be reported to the City Council for their input.

Director Thomas stated that the type of plantings being proposed in the buffer is just as important as the size of the buffer and that the Commission should take this into consideration.

Staff presented an example of 244<sup>th</sup> Ave SE in which the separation between the right-of-way is not 50' but the landscaping provides a significant screening.

Director Thomas stated how the zone transition and buffers are a new concept not only in the City but in neighboring jurisdictions. Regulations typically focus on commercial to residential or industrial to commercial/residential setback requirements.

- Commissioner O'Farrell commented that she has lived in an area similar to the examples given, and how when sitting in their back yard it was noisy and unenjoyable with all of the traffic noise. She further stated that the Commission should consider the neighborhood residents when talking about neighborhood character and not just citizens at large.
- Director Thomas stated that minimum lot size regulations are an option to consider as well.

Commissioner Blau spoke to how landscaping has more to do with neighborhood character than a buffer width. Commission Blau went on to state that a minimum lot size requirement has been a controversial topic in the past.

Commissioner Anderson states that there needs to be a better definition of buffer in the municipal code similar as how it is very clear when it comes to critical areas. Thinking back to the joint meeting with Council, Commission Anderson asked Jeff to speak on neighborhood character in consideration of the Comprehensive Plan

- Director Thomas said that staff could gather a policy summary of the Neighborhood Character and would provide this information at the March 2, 2017 meeting. The ideas being presented tonight is based on public input that City Council has received in regards to current development within the City.

Commissioner Anderson believes there needs to be a greater discussion on connectivity.

Commission Garrison commented that there is no division between neighborhoods and that there should be more delineation so that people from each neighborhood can be proud of what they have. Commission Garrison mentioned that development should not be based on a hard buffer numbers but that natural features should be used and enhanced. These buffers do not just serve as visual separation but could also provide the opportunity for trails and other forms of connectivity.

Commissioner Crandall would like to see more ideas, examples, and visualizations of the proposed changes.

Commissioner Blau asked staff if there are existing regulations between zones? And what is required in these setbacks?

Senior Planner McIntyre stated that it's encouraged that native plants be used in landscape setbacks

- Commissioner Anderson would like to see a summary of SMC21A.35 (Landscaping Standards) to help define what the transitions are between zones and streets.
- Commissioner Blau states that what is being proposed for arterial buffering is well founded and there is a lot of community support, however the zoning transition buffer options are concerning.

- Commissioner Anderson agrees with Commissioner Garrison that natural features need to be used as buffers and separations.
- Commissioner Blau stated that they have been asked about why replanting instead of preservation. The answer is that it's easier to develop a lot without trees.
- Senior Planner McIntyre pointed out that there are provisions in our code that hold existing cluster of trees or trees within a continuous canopy as more valuable and desired to be saved during development than a single standalone tree.
- Commissioner Blau wanted it to be known that he is very proud of the tree regulations that the Commission was able to pass, even if some believe it is too little to late

Commissioner Crandall asked the following questions to be answered at a later time, prior to moving on to the next topic.

- Are there groups, guidance, grants, or programs that already exist to help with creating code and programs relating to this topic?
- Senior Planner McIntyre stated that he is not aware of any current programs but would look further into what is available.

Commissioner Blau asked Staff to further research if these types of buffers create any legal challenges

Commissioner Garrison believes that we should enhance the natural features along the arterials, such as the many riparian areas that Sammamish is known for, to create a character that represents our natural systems.

Commissioner Crandall asked if the fellow Commissioners would like to rearrange the agenda to take public comment now on the current topic prior to the training videos.

Commissioner Blau motioned to rearrange the agenda, Commissioner O'Farrell seconded.  
Approved Vote 5:0

#### **Public Comment – Agenda (7 Minutes) – 7:32 PM [Bookmarked Video Link](#)**

Paul Stickney wanted to point out how in his history of developing land that earth berms are very effective at reducing noise to surrounding areas. He also suggested that the City could create a map of vacant parcels as well as underdeveloped parcels as a way to see where growth could be targeted.

Questions:

- Are the proposed setbacks from edge of pavement or from edge of right of way?
- Is this an original concept or have other peer cities considered or implemented this?
- Are these proposed changes net density issues or just where homes could be put on a site?

Mary Wictor presented a series of photos to highlighting neighborhood character.

#### **Public Comment Closed – 7:46 PM**

Commissioner Crandall called for a five minute break prior to showing the short course training video series.

**NEW BUSINESS - 7:51 PM**

[Bookmarked Video Link](#)

**Dept. of Commerce Short Course Training Video Series**

Planning Manager Hilde gave an introduction to the Short Course on Local Planning video presentation

**First Video ([Comprehensive Planning Basics](#))**

**Second Video ([Implementing Your Plan](#))**

Commissioner Garrison asked if Sammamish has TDR areas?

- Senior Planner McIntyre answered that yes, there is a TDR program available to increase density while preserving rural lands adjacent to the city
  - Commissioner Garrison asked for staff to explain how this works
  - Staff replied that the program works by having a property owner sell their development rights (sending site) to developer who in turn uses these rights to increase density on their project site (receiving site).
  - Commissioner Garrison asked if we have property lower than R-1
  - Staff answered that R-1 is the lowest zoning in Sammamish
  - Staff continued on to explain that the City has an interlocal agreement with King County where TDR credits can be purchased from sending sites located in the “Emerald Necklace” to developers who want increase density within the Town Center receiving site area.
  - A presentation to Council on TDR’s is scheduled for 2/14/17.

**Third Video ([Updating Your Plan](#))**

Vice-Chair Crandall asked to entertain extending the meeting beyond the scheduled 8:30 ending time

- Commissioner Blau motioned to extend, Commissioner Anderson seconded.  
Commission voted 5:0 to extend the meeting.

**Fourth Video ([Washington’s Legal Framework of Land Use Planning](#))**

Senior Planner McIntyre wanted to clarify that a short plat in Sammamish is 9 lots or fewer.

**Fifth Video ([Constitutional Issues and Other Protections](#))**

Vice Chair Crandall asked what type of involvement does the Planning Commission have in judicial decisions?

- Senior Planner McIntyre explained that in Sammamish we use the Hearing Examiner model of judicial decisions and do not rely on the Planning Commission for judicial decisions

Commissioner Blau shared how vesting works when addressing the public’s concerns about why something is still happening if an ordinance has been passed. This is because a development is vested to the rules in place at the time of submitting a complete application.

Senior Planner McIntyre agreed and went on to say that Washington's vesting laws are very developer friendly and that once applications are deemed complete these applications are tied to all laws and codes in place at that time.

Vice-Chair Crandall asked if there are any additional questions for Staff. If not, is there any public comment. No public comment was given.

**Motion to Adjourn:** Frank Blau motioned to adjourn; seconded. **Approved 5:0**  
Meeting adjourned at 8:50pm.

Chair: Shanna Collins

PC Coordinator: Kevin Johnson

[Video Audio Record 2/2/17](#)

*Roberts Rules of Order applied: [RONR (10<sup>TH</sup> ed.), p. 451, 1. 25-28]*